

He stood up. He fought the good fight. He fought for all of us. I know that he still have so much to give.

Senator, thank you for your incredible service. Thank you for being such a generous and wonderful friend to me and to my family. I wish you, Landra, and your family many more years of happiness and good work. We will all miss you dearly.

TRIBUTES TO BARBARA MIKULSKI

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a dear friend and colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, as she retires after three decades in the U.S. Senate.

Senator MIKULSKI has been serving the people of Maryland in one form or another for more than 50 years.

From her time as a social worker helping at-risk children and seniors, to the Baltimore City Council, to her four decades of service in the United States Congress, Senator MIKULSKI has always been a strong champion for women, for working families, and for Maryland.

On the rare occasion I have found myself on the other side of an issue from Senator MIKULSKI, as we in Virginia occasionally have been, I actually find myself wishing Maryland had a little bit less of a tenacious advocate in the Senate than BARBARA MIKULSKI.

But luckily for me, I have much more often had the good fortune to be standing side-by-side with Senator MIKULSKI.

I have been proud to work with her and learn from her on a great many issues which will remain her legacies even after she leaves the Senate.

In her position on the Senate Appropriations Committee, for instance, Senator MIKULSKI has been instrumental in making sure the Federal Government abides by its commitments to Metro, and we have worked together to improve oversight of the system's safety.

In an environment where they are more often treated as political punching bags than like the dedicated public servants they are, Federal employees have always known that they can count on Senator MIKULSKI to have their backs.

Senator MIKULSKI might occasionally have trouble reaching the microphones—but when it comes to the issues affecting women, children, working families, and Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI's voice is nearly always the loudest voice in the room.

Today there are more students in school, more women in the workforce, and fewer seniors living in poverty as a result of her determination and her leadership.

It is well known in this body that Senator MIKULSKI is a force of nature, with a wit to match.

Her signature one-liners aren't just funny—though they usually are—but she also has a way of cutting to the heart of the issue and speaking directly to people that I know will be greatly

missed by both her colleagues and her constituents.

It is no surprise that the people of Maryland have chosen, over and over again, to send this extraordinary leader back to the Senate on their behalf.

Today there are 20 women Senators, but when BARBARA MIKULSKI first decided to “suit up” and run for the Senate, women in public office at any level were a rarity indeed—rarer still in this body.

Thirty years after President Reagan, campaigning for her opponent in that first Senate race, predicted that BARBARA MIKULSKI would go the way of other short-lived fads like the “Edsel, the hula hoop, and the all-asparagus diet,” Senator MIKULSKI retires from the Senate as the longest serving woman in Congressional history.

So while she may be leaving us here in the Senate, one of Senator BARB's greatest legacies may be inspiring generations of American women to follow in her footsteps.

Senator MIKULSKI, thank you for your service and your friendship.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the many accomplishments of my colleague Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, the dean of the Senate women. When she took office during the 100th Congress in 1987, BARBARA was the first Democratic woman Senator elected in her own right. There were only two women Senators at the time, BARBARA and Nancy Kassebaum. Certain expectations that we could consider arcane, such as women were expected to wear skirts or dresses on the floor, were still in place. In 1993, BARBARA, Nancy, and their staffs mounted a simple protest—they wore trousers on the Senate floor.

“The Senate parliamentarian had looked at the rules to see if it was okay,” she recounted. “So, I walk on that day and you would have thought I was walking on the moon. It caused a big stir.”

As someone who rarely wears skirts and only wears pantsuits on the Senate floor, I and many others are grateful. This simple act of commonsense defiance, if you will, in a body steeped in tradition, exemplifies BARBARA's approach to getting things done and getting on with the important matters of the day. That she is a trailblazer goes without saying.

Throughout her time in the Senate, BARBARA has fought for equal pay for equal work. The gender pay gap costs women hundreds of thousands of dollars over their lifetime. She led the charge in the Senate to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and I am proud to stand with her in calling for the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act and other equal pay proposals.

As our dean, usually over dinner, we get to know each other on a personal level. In a body where these opportunities are rare, it matters. During the summer of 2014, it was my turn to host our gathering. I greeted each Senator with a lei, served local food from Hawaii, and hosted a hula performance.

The Aloha spirit was definitely present.

The next day, BARBARA told me that the dinner was very special and gave her a better understanding about what it must be like to be in Hawaii. It meant a lot to me for BARBARA to make that observation because Hawaii truly is a special place where embracing and caring for others, our ohana, is how we aspire to live.

BARBARA has shown her Aloha spirit to me and so many others throughout her time in public service. I will miss her wit, leadership, drive, and compassion.

Aloha, BARBARA, and a hui hou, “until we meet again.”

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA BOXER

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the contributions of my colleague and friend, Senator BARBARA BOXER. While her distinguished time in the House and Senate comes to a close at the end of the 114th Congress, she will continue to be engaged and serve her community.

During her more than 30 years in the House and Senate, BARBARA worked tirelessly to create a better future for all Americans. When she first announced that she would run for the Senate in 1990, BARBARA declared, “I will be running based on issues of the environment, a world of peace, economic prosperity, individual freedom of choice and freedom of the arts.”

This declaration defined her time in Congress.

Becoming the first woman to chair the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works reflected her decades of dedication to protecting the environment. BARBARA was unafraid to take on big oil, and fought to block oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. She also led the effort in the Senate to invest in the development of clean energy technology and to strengthen protections for our oceans.

BARBARA knew that, for many, achieving “economic prosperity” meant attaining a college education. But the soaring cost of college keeps them from attaining a degree. Each year, BARBARA was one of the strongest leaders to ensure that college students have access to Pell grants, which nearly half of college students in our country depend upon. BARBARA's advocacy moved the ball forward, and I was proud to join her in crafting a caucus-wide bill that included our provisions to strengthen and protect Pell grants, and lower interest rates on student debt.

BARBARA also never forgot her promise to protect “freedom of choice.” She authored the Freedom of Choice Act of 2004, which would have affirmed that “every woman has the fundamental right” to make her own reproductive health decisions. Without fail, BARBARA leads us each and every time that access to reproductive health care comes under attack.